

TRIB D OCT 16 1949

Family Row Ends in Woman Killing Sister

A family squabble that began with disagreement between the children about curling their hair grew into a free-for-all climaxed by an Oakland woman fatally shooting her sister last night.

Mrs. Hocile Tebo, 46, of 1328 Campbell Avenue, told police she shot and killed her sister, Queen O. Smith, 720½ Peralta Street, during a violent quarrel at the Tebo home.

'I SLEW SISTER' IN FAMILY ROW, ADMITS WOMAN

A free-for-all fight over how a little girl's hair should be curled led to the gunshot slaying of one sister Saturday night and the arrest of the other for investigation of murder.

Held after she called police to report, "I just killed my sister," is Mrs. Hocile Tebo, 46, of 1328 Campbell Street.

She surrendered herself and a .38 revolver after police arrived at the Campbell Street address and found the body of her sister, Mrs. Queen O. Smith, 44, of 720½ Peralta Street, lying on the bedroom floor.

According to Mrs. Tebo, the shooting climaxed a fight that began when two of her daughters began squabbling over how to curl their hair.

Mrs. Smith took the side of one girl, Mrs. Tebo took the side of the other.

Words were soon exchanged for fists, said Mrs. Tebo, with Mrs. Smith allegedly hitting Mrs. Tebo in the eye.

Mrs. Tebo said she locked herself in the bedroom, but her sister broke in the door.

As Mrs. Smith approached her menacingly, Mrs. Tebo grabbed a revolver from the bureau and fired, one bullet hitting the sister in the head, one in the chest, she told officers. Then she called police.

Complaint Filed In Sister Slaying

A murder complaint against Mrs. Hocile Tebo, 46, of 1328 Campbell Street, accused of fatally shooting her sister Saturday night, was signed today by the sister's common-law husband, James Titus, 45, of 720½ Peralta Street.

Mrs. Tebo is charged with killing Mrs. Queen O. Smith, 44, of the Peralta Street address, during a violent quarrel while Mrs. Smith was a visitor at the Tebo home.

The fracas began when two of Mrs. Tebo's daughters disagreed while curling their hair, Mrs. Tebo told police. After the shooting, Mrs. Tebo phoned police to inform them "I just killed my sister," then waited at her door to surrender the gun.

allowing the gas leak.

Court Dates Set

For Murder Suspects

Lee Andrew Griffin, 23, of 1241 Willow Street, and Mrs. Hocile Tebo, 46, of 1328 Campbell Street, were arraigned in Oakland Justice Courts today on separate charges of murder.

Griffin, charged with the holdup slaying of James Gorman, 54, of 1369 Eighth Street, September 24, will appear before Judge Chris B. Fox on November 9 for preliminary examination.

Mrs. Tebo, charged with the slaying of her sister, Mrs. Queen O. Smith, 44, in a family quarrel last Saturday night, will appear before Judge Joseph Kennedy next Thursday at which time the date for her preliminary hearing will be set.

Slaying Suspect Revealed As Former 'Blues' Singer

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If Mrs. Hocile Tebo, 46, is singing the blues in the Oakland city jail where she is held on a charge of fatally shooting her sister, it comes naturally.

In years gone by Mrs. Tebo has been one of the country's outstanding blues singers, teaming up with such jazz greats as Louis (Satchmo) Armstrong, it was revealed today.

Her career as a singer of "in the groove" jazz came to light after Mrs. Tebo was charged with killing Mrs. Queen O. Smith, 44, during a violent quarrel between the pair while Mrs. Smith was a visitor at the Tebo home, 1328 Campbell Street, Saturday night.

ARGUMENT CLIMAXED

The shooting climaxed the argument that began when Mrs. Tebo's two daughters began squabbling over how to curl their hair. Mrs. Smith took the part of one girl and Mrs. Tebo the other.

After the shooting, Mrs. Tebo called police and, much like a lament from one of the songs she made popular, told police "I just killed my sister."

The melody of more than one jive dirge has run through her head as

she sits in the Oakland city jail, looking back over her career that started in 1925.

Then a young woman of 22, she met Armstrong through her father, George W. Thomas, a Chicago music publisher.

'EXCITING TIME'

"That was an exciting time for me," she recalled. "I was given a tryout by the old Satchmo and when he liked my voice I started making records with his band."

What a jazz-making outfit that was! It included the late great "Fats" Waller as well as such "musicians' musicians" as Johnnie Dodds and Johnnie St. Cyr.

Every time Mrs. Tebo—she was known by her maiden name of Hocile Thomas in those days—cut a record it had the musical backing of one of the greatest jazz outfits in the country.

Recently, more than 20 years after she had stopped making records the New York company wrote her a letter that some of her records are being reissued.

REISSUES PLANNED

"They mentioned the 'Wash Woman Blues' specifically but indicated that others including 'Sunshine Baby,' 'The Fishtail Dance' and 'Adam and Eve Had the Blues' may be reissued," she said.

After about two years of making records, during which time she also filled engagements in Chicago's Plantation supper club, Miss Thomas retired to become Mrs. Arthur Tebo.

Two years ago she was reading the newspaper "Chicago Defender,"

when suddenly she was startled to see her own name leap out of the paper at her. Would she, the newspaper personal said, get in touch with her old agent, Rudy Blush?

"I did and he came out to the coast for me to make a record. We cut it in a studio at the Mark Hopkins Hotel. It was all mine. I wrote the composition, 'Tebo's Boogie' and accompanied myself on the piano."

REPUTATION MOUNTS

A reputation like hers keeps mounting. In September, 1948, she was invited to sing an engagement at the Swing Club in San Francisco with Kid Orry's band, so she dusted off the old-time jazz numbers for that appearance.

"Blush asked me if I wouldn't like to come out of retirement into more active work but I told him I had my home and family now and that was enough," Mrs. Tebo said.

She said her family was a musical one. An aunt, Sippie Wallace, still is singing in Detroit, and an uncle, Hersel Thomas, played piano with several bands including Armstrong's.

All this was before the harmony in her family turned into discord that landed Mrs. Tebo in jail where she now awaits trial for murder.

Former Blues Singer Faces Trial Here for Murder of Her Sister

TRIB D NOV 10 1949

A former blues singer was held to answer to Superior Court today to face trial for the murder of her sister October 15.

The defendant is Mrs. Hocile Tebo, 46, charged with the slaying of her sister, Mrs. Queen O. Smith, 44, of 720½ Peralta Street. Police said that following a shooting incident in Mrs. Tebo's home at 1836 Campbell Street she called officers and handed them a .38 caliber revolver, saying: "I just killed my sister."

Mrs. Tebo was held to answer in the Oakland Police Court yesterday by Judge Joseph A. Kennedy. The autopsy surgeon, Dr. Vasco A. Salvadorini, told the court the cause of death was from two bullet wounds, "almost instantly," one in the left temple, the other in the left chest.

Patrolman C. J. Miller testified Mrs. Tebo admitted the shooting after he was called to her home and gave him the alleged murder weapon.

An aunt of the sisters, Mrs. Irene Hughes of Houston, Tex., who had been staying with Mrs. Tebo, said on the witness stand the sisters had been playing the piano and singing before an argument began during which Mrs. Smith slapped her sister and both fell to the floor.

Later, Mrs. Hughes recited, Mrs. Smith rushed into a bedroom, there came a trio of shots, and subsequently Mrs. Tebo emerged with a revolver in her hand.

Defense Attorney Joseph Deasy asked that all conversation recorded

during the examination of the defendant be stricken on the grounds no corpus delicti had been shown but Judge Kennedy ruled in favor of Prosecuting Attorney Ray Mellana.

Singer Acquitted In Murder Trial

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Mrs. Hocile Tebo, 46, a former blues singer, was free today, acquitted of slaying her sister, Mrs. Queen O. Smith, 44, who attacked her in an argument over coiffuring the hair of Mrs. Tebo's daughter, Queenie, 10.

A jury of seven men and five women, deliberating Mrs. Tebo's case of self defense for one hour, yesterday vindicated her in the court of Superior Judge Edward J. Tyrrell.

Defense Attys. Joseph R. Deasy and Philip L. Evans presented a case showing that Mrs. Smith bullied her sister over a period of time and had struck Mrs. Tebo dur-

ing the final argument.

Counsel also produced evidence to show that Mrs. Tebo once had been struck with a coke bottle wielded by Mrs. Smith, suffering almost total loss of her vision. Hospital records were introduced stating that Mrs. Tebo had only 10 per cent of her eyesight.

Evans and Deasy emphasized this in coupling it with the fear Mrs. Tebo had for her sister. The fatal scrap occurred at Mrs. Tebo's home, 1836 Campbell Street, on October 15.

Mrs. Tebo, when struck during the squabble, fled to her bedroom and grabbed a .38 caliber pistol out of a bureau as Mrs. Smith broke in the door. Mrs. Smith was shot twice.